

## It's Time to Press Philippians 3:12-14 (ESV)

God has done it all already, but what we can do for Him is earnestly seek His kingdom and His righteousness, and the things we need in this life will be added to us.

God wants more from our hearts in order to serve others; He wants all of us in service to Him. God's calling us to do more. What we've done in the past has worked, but it won't work for everybody. There are more people whom God wants us to reach. God has a higher calling for us to press into Him to find out what more we can do to draw others to Christ.

Paul said we press toward the mark (goal) to reach a place in our knowledge of God where we can lead others to Him. Paul is saying that he's going to press toward that mark/goal that's in Christ Jesus. The goal has nothing to do with how smart we are or how smart our goals are, but it's about what God has already established that He's allowing us to participate in. We can use those giftings and talents He has already put in us to be like Him.

But to get there, we must change some things.

### **We Have To Change Our Hearts**

We must turn our hearts to the things of God and what He wants to do in and through us. When our hearts are not turned toward God, we will think we are doing right, but it's not right before God. If we want to press on toward the mark that God has set before us, we must do what's right before God and change our hearts to line up with His will. Our hearts must be pliable so God can do a work in our hearts at any moment to move us to His purpose and will. Ask, "How much is our love and worship toward God overshadowing everything that's going on in our lives?" Paul is saying that God has already given him his assignment, and he will keep pressing on to reach that goal to deliver the news to the Gentiles. He keeps pressing even when it doesn't always feel good. Don't let the situations of life keep us from hitting the mark that God has called us to hit.

### **When Our Hearts Change, We Change**

When our hearts change, how we walk changes and how people see us changes. God asks us questions about ourselves because He wants us to know our identity in Him. We must be careful not to take on the identity of the world, which is a false identity. Paul is telling us to be aware of those falsehoods (those who come into our lives to get us off course) and keep pressing for our own safety. These falsehoods are identity crises that tell us we are not children of God and that God does not have a purpose for us. Because none of our accolades in life mean anything if we don't press toward the prize of knowing God. In Philippians 3:12, Paul says he has not become

perfect. It's not that we become perfect, but that we become one with the perfect one. God has already put us in a place to prepare us for the work of the gospel, and the strain that we go through in the press is part of our development. When things don't work out the way we plan, we learn to trust God. Our development happens in stressful situations. Reaching the goal is the result of our pressing in by getting to know God, spending time with Him, and inquiring of Him. There are areas in our spiritual lives that we must further develop, such as our prayer life and spending time in the Word. It's in the stressful and chaotic moments in life that our faith can be developed to trust God. Often, we don't know the way to go because we haven't pressed in to find out what God is doing in our lives.

### **Our Development Is Not For Ourselves Alone**

Paul says in Philippians 3:17 to follow me as I follow Christ. Paul is asking us to imitate him so we will look more like Christ. We are making disciples not just from our preaching and teaching, but also by the way we live. God is calling us to spend time with Him so He can tell us what He has purposed for us to do with the life He has given us, and so others can see Him through us. When we understand that call, we understand how important it is for us to press so that we might know him (Philippians 3:10). Our lives should look so much like Christ that we'll make disciples without even trying. Our discipleship will be a by-product of others seeing Christ when we show up. Salvation is not all; there is a higher calling, and it is to know Him, to imitate Him, and to make disciples. It is the will of the Father that all men will be saved, and God has done His part. The question is, "Will we do our part?"